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THE CHALLENGE OF OUR CHANGING COMMUNITY

By Keith Glennan

Chairman deConingh, Monsignor Mohan, trustees of the Welfare Federation, distinguished guests. It is both a high honor and a difficult task to follow the many distinguished speakers who have addressed this meeting in other years. I see in this audience many familiar faces, faces of people whom I have had the privilege of serving in activities aimed to better the Greater Cleveland community. It is a pleasure to see you again at this sixteenth annual Health and Welfare Institute of the Welfare Federation of Greater Cleveland.

The Federation, to my mind, is one of the finest symbols of Cleveland's civic achievement. The Federation and its more than 200 member organizations have made tremendous contributions to the health and social welfare of our city. In caring for the needs of the aged, the orphans, the chronically ill, the mentally disturbed, and the helpless, your activities have been carried on with a generous regard for human dignity - within a businesslike framework that stands as an example of administrative efficiency in this field. In effect, the Welfare Federation has truly replaced the implied cynicism in the old remark "charity begins at home" with an idealistic and practical approach to the solution of the problems of the unfortunate of the entire community.

Characteristically, Clevelanders have operated as a community of citizens willing - even eager - to devote time, effort and money to the improvement of the well being of their fellow citizens. The Welfare Federation has been one of our most effective agencies for the guiding and directing of these efforts. It would be impossible adequately to recognize the contributions of the hundreds of individuals who have accepted - and discharged - the heavy responsibilities for leadership in the affairs of the Federation. I wish I could say that their tasks - so well done up to the present - will become less demanding in the future. But I can't - for it just isn't going to work out that way. The future, in my opinion, will hold more problems and more challenges than the past. I shall attempt to amplify that statement in the next few minutes and to point out that problems and challenges really provide the spice of life - the opportunities for effective and useful action by each of us.

The topic for this year's institute is particularly appropriate - The Challenge of Our Changing Community. It seems to me to be the local application of a broader topic which might be stated as The Challenge of Our Changing Times. The dominant characteristic of these times is the rapid rate at which science is providing the mechanisms for change in our personal lives and in our community and national

international responsibilities. As Professor Charles Frankel of Columbia recently wrote in an article entitled The Third Great Revolution of Mankind, "The swift pace of technology is increasing the speed of change in both the surface of our life and our deep-seated habits. Where once we were able to mark off our historical epochs in centuries, now we shall have to mark them off in quarter centuries or even decades. 'The Space Age' or 'The Atomic Age' might equally well be called 'The Age of Acceleration'."

Late in January, I was privileged to participate in a meeting in Washington with a group of leaders in various fields of science. This was a steering committee established by the American Association for the Advancement of Science to plan a meeting to be held later this month for the purpose of discussing the place of science in our national affairs. To focus our attention and that of the probable participants, we agreed on a statement of the problem which was largely the work of Dr. Warren Weaver of the Rockefeller Foundation, the chairman of the committee. Because that statement seemed to bear directly on our discussion today, I have taken the liberty of quoting and paraphrasing from it rather liberally in preparing this paper.

In part we said that following closely on the discovery of fission - the splitting of the atom - we began to sense the fact that man's impending control of atomic and nuclear power made possible, and indeed made inevitable, the beginning of a new age. As the still more vast potentialities of fusion were made available for destructive purposes in the hydrogen bomb and as it became clear that these incredible forces would presently be tamed for nonmilitary use, the magnitude of our break with the past became visibly greater and greater.

We are just beginning to see that even these advances, tremendous as they are, constitute the warning, rather than the substance, of what is to come. Our successful probing into the nucleus of the atom is but an example of the clear fact that science is entering a new and accelerated state of advancement, which will give to man a kind of control over his environment, over himself, and over his destiny, which we have as yet only vaguely sensed. As Dr. Weaver phrased it, "We are not only probing the atom with prospects that are - just as they were in the case of nuclear energy - both marvelous and frightening, we are on the threshold of an equally revolutionary probing of the cell and of the mind. At the same time, man is on the verge of exploding into the universe."

Against this impending and accelerating change, it is tempting to back off into a quiet corner and ask, "Do we really want to do this?" There is every reason to believe that this is an idle and useless question.

Like it or not, this tremendous and awesome change is happening. Man is in the early stages of an astronomical break with the past - a discontinuity in human experience that the race has not before encountered. The question is not, do we like this change, but how can we prepare to meet it? We are in fact saying that man is on the very edge of a new relation to the atom, to the cell, to himself, and to the universe in which he is set.

This scientific revolution will totally dwarf the industrial revolution. It will be more compelling, and will pose more urgent problems. What faces man is not, in any restricted sense, a scientific problem. Scientific issues are vitally and almost universally involved. The special knowledge of the scientist is necessary, to be sure, but scientific knowledge would be powerless or dangerous if it were not effectively polled with, and brought to the service of, the social scientists, the humanists, the statesmen, the philosophers, and indeed all segments of our society.

If you will accept this as a reasonable statement of the problems posed by our changing times, what does it mean when related in our own community? How can we meet the challenge of this change?

We must first accept the fact that we cannot avoid the immediate consequences of the age of acceleration. Urbanization is a fact which cannot be avoided by a retreat to suburbia. As Dr. Paul Ylvisaker of the Ford Foundation puts it in a piece he has written from the presumed vantage point of the sociologist writing in the year 1980, "In or around 1957, not quite a generation ago, Americans became aware of the city. Really aware of it in the sense that they finally accepted the fact that life in an urban environment would be their permanent destiny. They had tried to dodge this fact for a full half century after the signs had become unmistakable, and they had done so with all the ruses to which humans resort when escaping what they may fear or dislike."

The Welfare Federation did not dodge but seems clearly to have accepted the implications of this development. Long ago, the artificial boundaries of 1890 were breached as the calls for better service in meeting human needs were met. It is not so clear that the agencies of Government have done so well in this area. It is not clear to me that the same level of effort and thought that have met the needs of the past in the welfare field will begin to meet the demands of the future. The need of long-range planning by highly competent individuals to supplement the shorter range year-by-year operations in the fields of health and welfare seems to me to be very great.

Perhaps some light will be thrown on these questions when the results of the research efforts of the Metropolitan Services Commission are made public. Within the next two or three weeks, the report of the Metro Study Group on Public Health will be released. Later this spring, the Metro report on Welfare will be completed and distributed. These reports, as well as others to be made in the fields of recreation and public safety, will present facts on which longer range planning may be based.

What is to be done with these facts will depend on the initiative of individuals and agencies such as the Welfare Federation, not upon Metro. Metro, by design and charter, is a research agency not an action agency. Thus it becomes a matter of importance to you and to this community that your officers and governing bodies give careful study to the Metro reports as they are released.

Basically, Metro's efforts are intended to point up the manner in which the demands of our citizens for governmental services in all fields - health, welfare, sanitation, traffic, public safety, and the like - can best be met. Emerging from Metro researches should be a pattern for governmental organization in the Greater Cleveland community that will vastly improve the current hodge-podge of duplication, over-lapping, and costly confusion that characterizes much of our present operation in these fields. Who will have a greater interest in the future governmental organization of this Greater Cleveland community than the members of the Welfare Federation?

The reports of Metro, the efforts of public officials, and particularly the efforts of interested citizens like yourselves, and the pressures of the near term future will bring about short term remedies in the health and welfare fields. For the longer term there is urgent need for the establishment within one or more of our educational institutions in Cleveland of an institute for education and research in the fields of urban and regional planning. I use those terms in their broadest sense and would include on the staff of such an institute competent and imaginative people in political science, sociology, architecture, economics, city planning, civil and sanitary engineering and operations research. In engineering education, we are faced with the fact that formerly sharp boundaries between the various fields of engineering are disappearing and the inter-relationships of the fields are assuming ever greater importance. The increasingly complex problems of urban living make it apparent that a similar development is taking place in the broad field of urban and regional planning. Restrictive boundaries between the interested but separate disciplines must be removed or at least lowered so that interplay is made much more easy. The fields of public health and welfare would have a central importance in this effort.

Such an institute could continue and keep current the research programs of Metro when that organization finishes its task. It would provide an excellent opportunity for the education of young men and women in this field of planning for living together in this age of acceleration. It is urgently needed now and will become a most valuable asset to this great community in the years ahead.

Some of you may be wondering why I have not mentioned Russia in any part of this discussion, since no speech these days seems complete without such reference. I suppose I have been a bit remiss in this regard, but I have a conviction that our greatest problems are not those which can be resolved or at least brought to the test by military means. We need to re-kindle the lamp of faith in our own principles of democracy and respect for the individual at the same time that we strengthen our military defenses against an aggression which might and probably would destroy our civilization were we to allow that aggression to happen. We need to see more clearly the real competition which exists between us and the Russians. In George Kennan's recent book - Russia, the Atom and the West - he puts it this way:

The fact is that we in the West are, of course, engaged in a competition with Russia, but it is not the kind of competition

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the Russians claim it is; we are not pursuing the same objectives, we are not at the same stage of development, our tasks are not similar. The real competition is rather to see which of us moves most rapidly and successfully to the solution of his own peculiar ideals. To my own countrymen, who have often asked me where best to apply the hand to counter the Soviet threat, I have accordingly had to reply: to our own American failings, to the things that we are ashamed of in our own eyes, or that worry us. To the racial problem, to the conditions in our big cities, to the problems of education and environment for our young people; to the growing gap between specialized knowledge and popular understanding in our country. I imagine that similar answers could be found for any of the other Western countries.

And I would like to add that these are problems which are not going to be solved by anything we or anyone else does in the stratosphere. If solutions are going to be found for these problems, it is going to be right here on this familiar earth in the dealings among men and in the moral struggle within the individual human breast. If one had to choose between launching satellites and continuing to give attention to these more homely problems here below, I should a hundred times over choose the latter, for unless we make this sort of progress in our problems on this earth, no satellite will ever save us. Whether we win against the Russians is primarily a question of whether we win against ourselves.

Ladies and gentlemen, the history of the Welfare Federation provides solid proof of the ability of this community to meet its human needs. Impressive as the record has been, this age of acceleration is bound to compound the human needs of the future into an unholy mess if we don't set about developing the governmental and private agency mechanisms best calculated to meet the tasks that lie ahead. With all the resources - education, industrial, governmental and individual - of this great community brought to bear on the problem, we must succeed. Nothing less will suffice. Nothing less would be worthy of the people of this great community which you and I are proud to call home.

Thank you.